

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

*Wednesday, December 4, 1991/
Agrahayana 13, 1913 (saka)*

*The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the
Clock*

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[*English*]

Projects in West Bengal

*182. SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN: Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of West Bengal have requested the Union government to give early clearance to assist the various projects in West Bengal; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Union Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

1. *Expansion of IOC Refinery at Haldia:*

On the request of CM, West Ben-

gal, a team of experts from Engineers India had been directed to reassess the possibilities of expanding the capacity of the refinery. The team has reported that on account of techno-economic problems expansion of the refinery is not possible. However, the setting up of a Revamp Lube Oil Block has been approved which will increase the production of lubes from 1,62,000 tonnes per year to 2,22,000 tonnes per year. This will be expedited.

2. *Haldia Fertilizer Project:*

The project was mechanically completed in 1979, but could not be commissioned due to mismatch of equipments and faulty design. Various possibilities for utilising the existing infrastructure, including the setting up of a new 600 tpd DAP plant, have been examined, but without any hope of success. A decision on the future of this project will be taken before this year-end.

3. *Modernisation of IISCO:*

SAIT has now submitted a proposal for modernisation costing Rs. 6500 crores which has been submitted to Project Investment Board. Clearances are being expedited.

4. *Hot Rolling Facilities at Alloy Steel Plant, Durgapur:*

In view of the decision to locate the hot rolling facilities at Salem, there is no proposal now to consider

location of Hot Polling Facilities at Durgapur.

5. *Webel - ITC's joint sector project for manufacture of Electronic Switching Equipment:*

Under the New Industrial Policy announced on July 24, 1991, licencing requirement has been done away with for telecommunications equipment. The State Government could take this up as a State sector or joint sector project.

6. *Installation of additional capacity in the Ore Handling Plant and Coal Handling Plant at Haldia Port complex:*

A scheme for modification of the Ore and Coal Handling Plants is at the final stages of completion. This will be sufficient to meet the needs of the Port.

7. *Dredging of Calcutta Port and Haldia Port Areas on a comprehensive scale:*

A major part of this has already been done. A scheme for improving the navigability of the Hooghly Estuary is nearing completion. Another scheme to ease the problem of siltation in the Balari Bar and adjacent Jiggerkhali flats has commenced in March, 1991. A dispute with the contractor has caused some delay, which will be sorted out quickly.

8. *Funding of anti-erosion measures on the Ganga in Murshidabad:*

There is no Central Government scheme under which part funding of this can be considered. However, keeping in view the importance of this project the possibility of special Central assistance will be explored.

9. *Railway Project:*

- (i) **Budget Allocation:** A total of Rs. 205 crores has been allocated for Railway projects in West Bengal for the year 1991-92, which represents a significant percentage of the total outlay of the Railways. This allocation comprises Rs. 121 crores for the Calcutta Metro project and Rs. 84 crores for new lines, doubling and traffic facility works.

- (ii) **Modernisation of Railway Mechanical Workshop at Kharagpur:** Phase - I of the modernisation was completed in 1986. Phase-II modernisation is under way and will be completed by 1992-93.

10. *Setting up of a Central Horticultural Research Station in North Bengal:*

There is no proposal with the Centre.

11. *Setting up of a Central Goat Research Centre at Salbani in Midnapore District:*

The responsibility for such a Centre primarily lies with the State Agricultural Universities. The Agricultural University of West Bengal has been requested to sent a proposal for examination by ICAR.

12. *Setting up of a Central cattle Research Centre at Haringhata in Nadia District:*

The Central Government is not inclined to open any more Cattle Centres and would like the States to set up farms suited to their own requirements. Part funding could be considered under any existing Centrally Sponsored Schemes.

13. *Establishment of a Security Press at Salbani in Midnapore:*

This is already under implementa-

tion. At present, techno-economic evaluation of the tenders is being done. the entire project is scheduled for completion by 1995.

14. *Clearance and funding of the Multipurpose Subamarekha Irrigation Project to benefit Bihar, Orissa and West Bengal:*

The Ministry of Environment and Forests have raised objections which are yet to be satisfactorily explained by the Orissa and Bihar Governments. The Centre is in touch with these Governments.

15. *Release of Central share of funding of the Multipurpose Teesta Barrage Project in North Bengal:*

Under the existing guidelines, Central Assistance is not given for irrigation Projects as irrigation is a State subject.

16. *Funding of the revised estimate for the Second Hoogly River Bridge:*

Due to constraint of resources it will be difficult for the Central Government to increase the Central Loan Assistance from Rs. 230 crores to Rs. 362 crores. However, as the Bridge is nearing completion, the matter is being considered as a special case, with a view to seeing this long delayed project completed.

17. *Allocation from Central Road Fund for implementation of schemes proposed by the State Government:*

The allocations could not be made as due to resource constraints, it has not been possible to augment the Central Road Fund this year.

18. *Release of funds for the City of Calcutta as per Recommendations of the National Commission on Urbanisation:*

As a policy the Government of India

does not give financial assistance for programmes for major metropolitan cities.

19. *Release of funds for the construction of a Children's Hall and a Joint-venture Cinema Hall in Calcutta as part of the Tercentenary celebration of Calcutta:*

The Central Government does not have any scheme under which assistance could be given to a State Government for construction of Children's Hall. With regard to the Cinema Hall, NFDC is agreeable to contribute upto 50% of the cost. Any further additional contribution would not be possible for the NFDC to bear.

20. *Funding of developmental and residual needs of refugee settlement including displaced persons from Assam:*

a) Size of Refugee Squatters' Holdings: The Central Monitoring Committee has recommended that the maximum ceiling may be increased to 400 sq. yards from the maximum ceiling of 300 sq. yards per family. It is, however, not possible to enhance the ceiling to 800 sq. yards as requested by the State Government.

b) Implementation of Refugee Rehabilitation Committee's recommendations. The Government of India expects that by this time the displaced persons should have merged into the mainstream of national life and further assistance should come from the normal area development schemes.

c) Development of DP Colonies: Under the scheme for development of DP Colonies Rs. 9.37 crores has already been released for phase - I and phase - II of the scheme. Phase - III of the scheme is presently under

consideration and a decision of this will be expedited.

21. Power Projects:

(i) **Bakreshwar Thermal Power Project:** This is a Soviet aided project. Recent developments in the USSR have affected the project. The Soviet side has also been backing out of previous commitments. The equipments proposed to be covered under the Soviet credit is now of the value of only 146 million Roubles as against a credit of 370 million Roubles available under the Inter-Governmental Agreement of 1987. The WBPDCL which is the West Bengal Agency to execute the project is unhappy with the working of the Soviet Agencies and would like to identify a suitable alternative in the interest of early implementation of the project. However, a decision will have to take into account India's bilateral relations with USSR. In the meanwhile, India's Ambassador has taken up the matter of finalising and signing of the contract with the Prime Minister of USSR.

(ii) **Sagardighi Thermal power project:** The West Bengal authorities had agreed to submit a project feasibility report in respect of the project for a capacity of 1000 MW and accordingly action has been initiated to obtain coal linkage. However, submission of the project report for a capacity of 4 X 500 MW by the West Bengal Power Development Corporation Ltd. (WBPDCL) has delayed the examination of the report by the CEA. The West Bengal Government's contention that the techno-economic appraisal of the report can be undertaken for two district phases compressing two 2 X 500 each is not possible by the CEA as the required details including cost

estimates are for a composite project of 4 X 500 MW. The State authorities had also indicated their option to implement the project in the private sector. The matter is pending in the State Government for a decision. With regard to the re-submission of the 1000 MW project report, CEA has also reminded WBPDCL on 22nd July, 1991.

(iii) **Budge-Budge Thermal Power Project:** In principle, clearance of the CEA has been given in January, 1991 for installation of a 2 X 250 MW Thermal power project by M/s. Calcutta Electrical Supply Corporation (CESC). The latest cost of the Project is Rs. 1606 crores. Ministry of Environment & Forest have given clearance subject to a proper rehabilitation plan. This has been since submitted by the CESC to the Ministry of Environment has been since submitted by the CESC to the Ministry of Environment & Forests. However, the views of the State Government as regards the land use pattern is still awaited. The Ministry of Power has given its clearance.

22. Haldia Petro-Chemicals Project:

The letter of intent has been issued to the West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation (WBIDC) in August, 1990 for setting up a 300,000 tpa ethylene capacity naphtha cracker alongwith downstream units. The State Government has requested for the assistance of GOI for making available funds from IDBI and other financial institutions. The Project has also been posed for World Bank assistance on the request of the State Government. World Bank have made certain queries which have been communicated to the West Bengal Government. In the meanwhile, the Project has also been

posed for IDB and IFC financing. Dialogue with IFC is continuing.

23. **Natural Gas for West Bengal:**

A decision on this issue can be considered only when a view is taken about pipeline transportation of gas from Tripura. The present position is that the development of Tripura gas fields is not likely to be taken up during the 8th Plan period because of resource constraints. As production of natural gas from these fields is very expensive, plans to develop the Tripura gas fields have not been accorded priority for allocation of funds by the Planning Commission.

24. **ONGC Exploration in Bengal Basin Area:**

So far 32 wells in the on shore and 7 wells in the off shore have been drilled in the Bengal Basin. 7 locations have been identified for further exploratory drilling. However, no commercial hydro-carbon deposits have been found. A turnkey contract has been awarded to the Soviet Union for 3D seismic survey and drilling in a portion of the Bengal Basin. One block is also likely to be offered for exploration to foreign oil Companies.

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I got a very big reply with 24 times: But, as you know, West Bengal State is the worst sufferer State due to the partition of India in 1947. When the West Bengal needs more care, more sympathy and more financial assistance from the Centre, it got nothing. If you go through the reply, you will find that most of them are evasive replies and step motherly attitude is clear from these replies. Sir, I would like to draw your attention to item No. 15, release of Central share of funding given to the Multipurpose Teesta Barrage...

MR. SPEAKER: You do not have to read. No, No. What has been given to you, you need not read, You ask the question. Please ask the pointed question.

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN: I am coming to my question. I would like to draw your attention to the Teesta Barrage Project which seeks to serve the irrigation facilities in 13 lakh hectares of land. It could have been the biggest irrigation project in Asia and with a capacity of 1800 M.W. Hydel Power and with navigation scope, this Teesta Barrage Project is the life line of North Bengal. This area is mainly populated with Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes people and it is a backward area.

MR. SPEAKER: Are you coming to the question or not?

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN: Yes Sir, I am coming to put the question. Even then in the informal Consultative Committee meeting held on 8th August, the Minister of Water Resources, Shri Vidyacharan Shukla, admitted that it should be declared as a national project. But, it was not done yet. May I know from the hon. Prime Minister and the Planning and Programme Implementation Minister here that whether they will declare this Teesta Barrage Project as a national project and give the financial help to it because it is in the backward area?

SHRI H.R.BHARDWAJ: Sir, the irrigation projects are all State projects and Centre has been giving special assistance to these projects and so far as Teesta Barrage Project is concerned, Rs. 5 crores were given in 1983-84, Rs. 15 crores were given in 1986-87 and Rs. 10 crores were given in 1987-88. So, this is the Central assistance given in relation to this project.

So far as the debt statement made by the Minister of Water Resources is concerned, I do not have the details of the statement. If there is any such statement, that can be discussed when the proposal relating to the Water Resources Ministry are discussed in the Planning Commission.

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is, of course, true that the Central assistance for this Project is only Rs. 5 crores, and rest Rs. 25 crores as a loan advance. The West Bengal State with its meagre income had already spent Rs. 348 crores for this Project. Hon. Prime Minister is here. He is the Chairman of the Planning Commission. Let him state clearly whether this Project is in a backward areas and whether this Project will be declared as a national project or not,

MR. SPEAKER: Are you going to declare it as a national project?

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN: It is for the information of the House. The second item is Haldia Fertilizer Project which was mechanically completed in the year 1979. After that twelve years have passed and now they are telling that it is without any hope of success and that a decision would be taken in this month of December. May I know who is responsible for this? I would like to have a clear answer with regards to (a) and (b).

SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ: Sir, as I submitted, all irrigation projects having regard to their importance, are State subjects and there are requests from almost half a dozen or dozen States to treat their irrigation projects as national projects, including the Teesta Project. So, you cannot take a decision in Planning Commission in isolation for one project. You will have to discuss nationally which projects can be given special assistance in a preferential treatment. So, you cannot say that one project in one State should be declared as a national project. There was a request, if I remember correctly, from the Water Resources Ministry that they would be listing twelve projects of national importance and on that the issue will have to be discussed in a larger forum, rather than discussing the Teesta Project in isolation. At the moment, all State irrigation projects are State subjects and we give them help in a preferential manner as a token of the Central assistance.

MR. SPEAKER: Shrimati Malini Bhat-tacharya.

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN: Sir, regarding part (b), the hon. Minister has not replied.

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down.

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN: Sir, I have asked two parts - part (a) and part (b). Part (b) with regard to Haldia Fertiliser Project has not been replied.

MR. SPEAKER: This is what happens when you ask a very long and confused question. I am not allowing. Please sit down now...

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Now please take your seat.

SHRIMATI BHATTACHARYA: Sir, firstly I should like to point out that with regard to dredging of Calcutta Port, it has been said that a major part of this has already been done. I do not think that this is a correct statement. I think the problem of dredging is still a very big problem in Calcutta Port and Calcutta Port is dying because of lack of dredging facilities.

Regarding Railway Project No. 9, I am surprised to notice that nothing has been said about the completion of the Circular Railway Project between Princeps Ghat and Majher Hat and the extension of the Metro Railway from Tolly Gunge to Garia.

With regard to serial No. 18, that is, release of funds under the recommendations of the Charles Correa Commission, I would say that it has been said in the answer that as a policy, the Government of India does not give financial assistance for programmes of major metropolitan cities. I would like to ask how much money is spent on the city of Delhi which is also a major metropolitan city like Calcutta, Bombay and Madras.

MR. SPEAKER: You please come to the question.

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARYA: Obviously, if there is a recommendation of the the Charles Correa Commission, then that recommendation is a recommendation for a change of policy. I want to know whether the Government would change its policy in this regard.

Finally, about the resettlement colonies for the refugees from East Bengal, we are very glad that the Government has at last accepted the State Government's proposal for an outright grant of the land. But still a very large number of refugees are waiting to get their documents and we hope that this would be finalised as quickly as possible.

SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ: Sir, so far as the dredging at Calcutta Port is concerned, I have submitted and I have submitted and I have given in the annexure that a scheme for improving the navigability of the Hooghly river is nearing completion. Another scheme to ease the problem of siltation in the Balari Bar and adjacent Jiggerkhali flats has commenced in March, 1991. There is a dispute between the contractor and the project management, that is perhaps causing a little delay and it is hoped that it will be sorted out quickly. It is not as though nothing is being done with regard to the dredging in Calcutta Port.

For the railways, as I submitted, a total budget of Rs. 205 crores has been allocated for West Bengal for the year 1991-92 and a significant percentage of this outlay for the railways is meant for Calcutta Metro Project. It is around Rs. 121 crores. So far as the other lines are concerned there is the provision of Rs. 83 crores.

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARYA: Sir, what about the circular railway project?

SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ: This is the money which has been allocated in 1990-91. This is specific with regard to Metro. So far as the other lines are concerned, the Ministry of

Railways will have to come forward with its proposals and then they will be considered within the limited resources which the Railways get. So far as the refugee problem is concerned, as already communicated to the hon. Member, the Centre has allowed for grant of 400 sq. yards of land to each refugee family and this is substantial relief as far as land is concerned. There was a proposal for 800 sq. yards but 400 sq. yards has been agreed to. There is no problem in implementing that provision to the refugees.

SHRIMATI MALINI BHATTACHARYA: He has not answered my question fully.

(Interruptions)

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: Sir, the kind of answer that is given.....

MR. SPEAKER: This is a time given for asking the question; not for interpretation of the replies.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE: I am just putting the question. My question is that when will the Metro Rail be fully commissioned? We are not satisfied with the answer that so much money has been provided. The promise that it is going to be commissioned soon is doled out every year to us. It is not satisfactory. In regard to Railways West Bengal is distinguished in having a district where the headquarters are not connected by Railways. When is the railway line upto Belurghat in West Dinajpur district going to be completed? Will adequate allocation for this purpose be made?

About the Circular Railway which my colleague was asking, I may say that there were press reports that the Railways are thinking of having trains from as far away as Burdwan which will be connected to the Circular Railway, and double-tracking and electrification will also be done. I want to know about the prospects of that project. Do you have anything in hand in regard to that? That is what we are interested to know.

SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ: I submitted the

year-wise allocation as such. All other projects and schemes are included in the Plan. Now the Plan formulations are going on. It will be advisable if this matter is taken up with the Ministry of Railways who can put forward the proposal.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Sir, as far as I know, the Government of West Bengal was assured of Central Plan assistance amounting to Rs. 835 crores for the year 1991-92 by the then Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Shri Mohan Dharia. Now, with the change of the Government, the Central assistance to the West Bengal Plan for the year 1991-92 has been reduced to Rs. 620 crores. The Government of West Bengal have fired up their own Plan for 1991-92 on the basis of the assurance given by the then Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission Shri Mohan Dharia. In view of the fact that this reduction has taken place, may I know from the hon. Minister whether the request of the Government of West Bengal to give them the remaining amount of Rs. 215 crores towards Plan assistance for the current year 1991-92 will be considered? Would the Government consider it favourably and allow the Government of West Bengal to proceed along with the Plan of 1991-92 as scheduled by them earlier? The second part of my question is....

MR. SPEAKER: There should be one question. You have already taken much time.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Sir, it is about the freight equalisation scheme in connection with west Bengal.

(Interruptions)

SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ: Sir, it will be seen that this question is with regard to projects. So far as Plan assistance for 1991-92 is concerned, it has already been determined. We are now at the stage of formulating the Eighth Plan. The National Development Council is meeting on 23rd and 24th of this month. All discussions with regard to Central assistance and Plan allocations will be held threadbare in that meeting with the

Chief Ministers and the Prime Minister and the Planning Commission. I personally feel that these are premature questions at this stage for me to answer. Let us await the ultimate decision of the National Development Council.

Utilisation of Ancient Texts for Development of Modern Technology

*183. **SHRI RAM KAPSE:** Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are planning to utilise/explore our ancient texts for the development of modern technology;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA): (a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) to (b). Efforts have been made in the country to utilize ancient texts for the development of modern technology, for example in the areas of Medicine & Health (Drug based on Guggulu for hyperlipidaemia) & Metallurgy (precision casting of aeroengine blades). Although modern developments may not directly be evolving from our ancient literature, inspiration is certainly drawn from the work of ancient India even in the most modern fields like the Space Sciences.

The following activities are a part of the ongoing endeavour in this direction:

Compilations:

- (1) A concise History of Science in India published by the Indian National Science Academy 1971.